

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7594
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AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC
/CINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ISLAMABAD 5631

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

CINCPAC FOR POLAD; CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEBR, PK, UR, AF, IN, XD, CH, IR, SA
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN'S SOVIET OPTION

REF: A) STATE 136041, B) ISLAMABAD 4693, C) MOSCOW 06104,
D) ISLAMABAD 4643, E) ISLAMABAD 5306 (ALL NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: GOP ADVISOR ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AGHA SHAHI'S
REMARKS TO THE SECRETARY (REF A) THAT PAKISTAN MAY BE FORCED
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TO "ACCOMMODATE" TO THE SOVIET UNION REFLECT A CURRENT, IF
NOT WIDELY HELD, ANXIETY IN ISLAMABAD. IN THE WAKE OF THE
AFGHAN COUP, THE GOP IS WORRIED ABOUT CHANGES IN THE
SOUTH ASIAN BALANCE AND HAS RECENTLY BEEN QUITE EXERCISED ABOUT
THE SOVIET THREAT. ISLAMABAD ALSO WORRIES ABOUT WHAT IT PERCEIVES TO
BT LACK OF WILL, OF CONSTANCY, AND OF SUPPORT IN USPOLICY, AND THE
GOP'S FEELINGS TOWARD CENTO ARE AT LOW EBB.

2. VARIOUS "SOVIET OPTIONS" FOR PAKISTAN COULD RUN FROM EASY ACCOMMODATION, SUCH AS CAUTIOUS AVOIDANCE OF OFFENSE TO SOVIET SENSIBILITIES AND SELECTIVE PUBLIC SUPPORT OF SOVIET AIMS AND INTERESTS, THROUGH WITHDRAWAL FROM CENTO, SOLICITATION OF GREATER SOVIET ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING MILITARY HARDWARE, TO FULL-SCALE COOPERATION WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND ITS ALLIES AND A REVERSAL OF THE LONG-STANDING SOVIET AND US ROLES IN PAKISTAN ITSELF.

3. A DELIBERATE COURTING OF THE SOVIET UNION, INVOLVING A CHOICE OF ELEMENTS FROM THIS LIST, MAY NOW BE SEEN BY SOME PAKISTANIS AS THEIR MOST EFFECTIVE LEVER IN EXTRACTING GREATER SUPPORT FROM THE WEST; BY OTHERS IT IS SEEN AS THEIR ONLY REAL DEFENSE AGAINST THE USE OF SOVIET POWER AND THE ACTIVITIES OF SOVIET SURROGATES; AND BY STILL OTHERS IT IS SEEN TO BE USEFUL FOR BOTH PURPOSES.

4. WITHIN PAKISTAN (AS IN THE USSR), THERE ARE PRESSURES FOR AND CONSTRAINTS AGAINST THE EXERCISE OF THIS OPTION. THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM HERE HAS ALWAYS COUNTED THE CONSTRAINTS "AGAINST" TO BE MORE FORMIDABLE THAN THE PRESSURES "FOR," ESPECIALLY WHEN THE MILITARY IS IN POWER. BUT EVENTS IN KABUL -- AND IN THE HORN OF AFRICA -- COMBINED WITH PAKISTAN'S INTERNAL WEAKNESSES, HAVE SET PRESSURES AT WORK HERE WHICH ARE NEW AND UNIQUE -- AND DIFFICULT TO PREDICT. END SUMMARY.

5. LONG-HELD GOP FEARS OF A SOVIET-DOMINATED SOUTH ASIA HAVE RISEN TO CONFIDENTIAL

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THE SURFACE IN THE WAKE OF THE COUP IN KABUL. WE HAVE BEEN TREATED TO A FLOOD OF LECTURES ON THE NEW SOVIET MENACE AND ON OUR LACK OF RESOLVE IN THE FACE OF THIS HEIGHTENED THREAT TO "AN ALLY." GOP ADVISOR ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AGHA SHAHI'S COMMENTS TO THE SECRETARY AT THEIR MEETING MAY 25 (REF A) REFLECT A STRAIN CURRENT, IF NOT YET WIDELY HELD, IN GOP THINKING -- THAT SOME FORM OF ACCOMMODATION TO THE SOVIETS -- BE IT MINIMAL GESTURES, SUCH AS SELECTIVE PAKISTANI SUPPORT FOR SOVIET POSITION IN THIRD WORLD OR NORTH-SOUTH AREAS, OR MORE SUBSTANTIAL ACTS, SUCH AS SEEKING INCREASED ECONOMIC AID OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE OR QUITTING CENTO OR COOPERATING ACROSS THE BOARD WITH SOVIET POLICIES -- IS THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID OR COUNTER EITHER DIRECT SOVIET PRESSURES OR MOSCOW-SPONSORED MISCHIEF EMANATING FROM KABUL.

6. EVEN IN THAT BROAD SPECTRUM OF PAKISTANI LIFE WHICH REMAINS HOSTILE TO SOVIET AIMS, THE THREAT OF ACCOMMODATING TO SOVIET POWER IS SEEN AS A USEFUL WAY OF REGAINING WESTERN ATTENTION AND SUPPORT.

7. THERE ARE, AT PRESENT, BOTH PRESSURES AND CONSTRAINTS AT WORK ON PAKISTAN'S POLICYMAKERS AS THEY CONTEMPLATE THE EXERCISE OF PAKISTAN'S SOVIET ALTERNATIVE.

A. PRESSURES: FOUR MAJOR PRESSURES ARE NOW AT WORK ON PAKISTAN
TO BE MORE ACCOMMODATING TO THE SOVIETS:
--THERE IS REAL FEAR AMONG MANY IN ISLAMABAD THAT THE COUP IN KABU

L
IS THE FIRST STEP IN THE HISTORICALLY-DETERMINED SOVIET THRUST TOWARD
THE WARM WATERS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN -- A REFRAIN WE HAVE HEARD
CONSTANTLY SINCE THE KABUL COUP, AND WHICH THE BRITISH RULERS OF
THE INDIAN EMPIRE ESPOUSED WITH EQUAL VIGOR GOING BACK MORE THAN 100
YEARS. RECENTLY PUBLICIZED COMMENTS BY THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN
ISLAMABAD (REF B) HAVE SERVED TO FUEL FEARS THAT THE RUSSIANS "MEAN
BUSINESS" AND THAT THE GOP MUST DROP ITS ANTI-COMMUNIST MANTLE AND
RESPOND POSITIVELY TO MOSCOW'S PRESSURES IF PAKISTAN IS TO REMAIN
INDEPENDENT.
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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
"AMEMBASSY PARIS 2157
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
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CINCPAC FOR POLAD; CINCEUR FOR POLAD

-- JUDGING THE SOVIETS TO BE THE EFFECTIVE MASTERS OF AFGHANISTAN UNDER THE TARAKI REGIME, PAKISTANI LEADERS CAN SEE ADVANTAGE IN COURTING MOSCOW AS A HEDGE AGAINST RESURRECTION OF THE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE TO CRISIS PROPORTIONS, AS WELL AS AGAINST AFGHAN MEDDLING IN THE PUSHTUN AND BALUCHI TRIBAL AREAS ON THIS SIDE OF THE PAK-AFGHAN BORDER.

-- MANY PAKISTANIS ALSO BELIEVE THAT A PRO-SOVIET KABUL WILL BE A NATURAL ALLY TO A PRO-SOVIET NEW DELHI, BASED ON THE 1971 INDO-SOVIET TREATY. AS WE HAVE REPORTED (REF D), THE GOP WAS UNHAPPY WITH NEW DELHI'S QUICK RECOGNITION OF THE TARAKI REGIME, AND THEY HAVE SINCE PAINTED IT TO US AS EVIDENCE CONTINUING INDO-SOVIET COOPERATION AND CONFIDENTIAL

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ALLIANCE.

-- PAKISTANIS ARE ALSO INCREASINGLY UNEASY ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. THE WHOLE FABRIC OF US-PAK RELATIONS APPEARS TO BE STRAINED, NOT ONLY BY DIFFICULT BILATERAL ISSUES SUCH

AS REPROCESSING, BUT ALSO BY MULTI-LATERAL POLICIES ON ARMS SALES AND

DEBT RESCHEDULING; THIS PERCEPTION THAT THE US NO LONGER CARES ABOUT PAKISTAN IS FED BY LOCAL PERCEPTIONS OF US WEAKNESS IN THE HORN OF AFRICA, IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND AFTER THE AFGHAN COUP -- IN SOUTH ASIA. GOP LEADERS ARE ALSO WORRIED BY THEIR BELIEF THAT THE FOCUS OF OUR SOUTH ASIAN INTERESTS HAS SHIFTED TO INDIA (PREDICTABLE, THEY SAY,

WITH A DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION); THEY FEAR THIS IS PART OF A PLAN TO RECOGNIZE "REGIONAL POWER CENTERS" LIKE IRAN AND INDIA, RELEGATING PAKISTAN TO A MINOR ROLE IN THE REGION. THE GOP'S CURRENT UNHAPPINESS WITH ITS CENTO CONNECTION, AN ALLIANCE NEVER PARTICULARLY USEFUL IN GOP EYES, ALSO CONTRIBUTES TO THIS PRESENT MALAISE. AND IF THE REPROCESSING ISSUE, SOMEHOW GOES AWAY, MANY RECOGNIZE THAT THE US AND PAKISTAN WILL STILL HAVE SERIOUS DIFFERENCES OVER AID LEVELS, SHIPMENTS OF CONCESSIONAL FOOD, ARMS SALES, AND THE GROWING US RELATIONSHIP WITH INDIA.

B. CONSTRAINTS: THERE ARE, HOWEVER, SIGNIFICANT CONSTRAINTS ON THOSE IN THE GOP WHO WOULD ARGUE FOR AN ACCOMMODATION WITH THE SOVIETS:

-- TO DO SO, THE GOP WOULD HAVE TO RECKON ON SOME JEOPARDY TO ITS EXTREMELY CLOSE TIES WITH CHINA -- AN EVENTUALITY NO GOVERNMENT IN ISLAMABAD WOULD RELISH. THE PRC IS PAKISTAN'S CLOSEST SUPPORTER, AND THE CHINESE NOW SUPPLY THE BULK OF THE GOP'S MILITARY REQUIREMENTS -- ALBEIT WITH INFERIOR EQUIPMENT. PEKING FOR ITS PART WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY LOOK ASKANCE AT A MAJOR MOVE BY ISLAMABAD TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW, ESPECIALLY IF THE GOP MADE SUCH A BASIC UNILATERAL, ANTI-

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WESTERN MOVE, AS QUITTING CENTO.

-- A GOP MOVE TOWARD MOSCOW WOULD ALSO PLACE IN DANGER PAKISTAN'S CLOSE RELATIONS WITH ITS PATRONS, THE CONSERVATIVE SAUDIS AND THE SHAH, WHO IS EVER MORE DISTRUSTFUL OF SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THE REGION AS A RESULT OF THE AFGHAN COUP. BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS/CULTURAL INFLUENCE IN PAKISTAN.

-- THERE IS ALSO A STRONG TRADITIONAL DISLIKE FOR THE SOVIETS, AND FOR COMMUNISM, IN PAKISTAN, AND NOT JUST AMONG THE RELIGIOUS PARTIES. ALTHOUGH SOME ELEMENTS IN PAKISTANI SOCIETY WOULD WELCOME A MOVE TO THE LEFT IN INTERNAL POLICIES, A GOVERNMENT WHICH CHOSE TO ACCOMMODATE

THE SOVIETS IN A POSITIVE OR HIGHLY VISIBLE MANNER WOULD PROBABLY FACE STRONG OPPOSITION FROM CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN THIS SOCIETY, AND ESPECIALLY FROM THE MILITARY. WHILE THE EXAMPLES OF LIBYA, IRAQ, AND EVEN KABUL, SHOW THAT MOSCOW AND MECCA ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE POLES -- AND THE PAKISTANI MILITARY HAVE DIRECT EXPERIENCE IN LIBYA -

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THE TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO WOULD HAVE A PALPABLE EFFECT ON ELEMENTS IN PAKISTAN'S POLICY.

8. ALTHOUGH WE BOW TO EMBASSY MOSCOW'S EXPERTISE, WE WOULD ESTIMATE FROM HERE THAT MOSCOW'S BALANCE SHEET WOULD ARGUE FOR NO FUNDAMENTAL RAPPROCHMENT WITH PAKISTAN. THE MAJOR CONSTRAINT TO CLOSE GOP-USSR RELATIONS ON THE SOVIET SIDE HAS ALWAYS APPEARED TO BE THE SOVIET EQUITY IN NEW DELHI, AND THE DIFFICULTIES IN SQUARING AN INFLUENTIAL POSITION IN BOTH PAKISTAN AND INDIA WITH THEIR CONTINUING DISPUTES, ESPECIALLY KASHMIR. HOWEVER, INDICATIONS THAT THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE MORE WILLING TO GAMBLE SOME INFLUENCE IN DELHI, ESPECIALLY WHEN FACED WITH OUR OWN MODERATE ASCENSION THERE, FOR INCREASED INFLUENCE -- AT OUR EXPENSE-- IN ISLAMABAD MAY BE A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN ANY PACKAGE OF INDUCEMENTS WHICH THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE WILLING TO OFFER PAKISTAN TO ADOPT A MORE ACCOMMODATING STANCE TOWARD THE USSR. MOSCOW COULD ALSO SEE WARMER PAK-SOVIET RELATIONS AS A WEDGE AGAINST CHINESE INFLUENCE AND ACCEPTABILITY HERE.

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9. BUT NEITHER OF THESE LATTER TWO CONSTRAINTS ON SOVIET POLICY, IT SEEMS TO US, WOULD PREVENT THE SOVIETS FROM DABBLING HERE AND FROM BEING RESPONSIVE TO PAK GESTURES SUGGESTING GREATER WARMTH AND PROMISING GREATER COOPERATION.

10. COMMENT: FOR THE PRESENT, WE BELIEVE THAT THE CONSTRAINTS OPERATING ON THE GOP, AND TO A LESSER DEGREE ON THE USSR, WILL PRECLUDE A MAJOR REVERSAL IN PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION -- WHICH IS WHAT A CONFIDENTIAL

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FAR-REACHING ACCOMMODATION TO SOVIET POWER AND INTERESTS WOULD BE UNDER THIS MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN PARTICULAR, AND UNDER ANY LIKELY MILITARY SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT, THE CONSERVATIVE CONSTRAINTS OF THIS SOCIETY WOULD BE ESPECIALLY STRONG. THE PAKISTAN ARMY'S TRADITIONAL ANTI-COMMUNIST OUTLOOK IS A BRAKE ON PRECIPITOUS ACTION BY A MARTIAL LAW REGIME.

11. THESE CONSTRAINTS WOULD NOT RULE OUT A FLIRTATION, HOWEVER, ANY MORE THAN THEY HAVE RULED OUT A CLOSE AND COOPERATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH A CHINESE REGIME, WHICH IS COMMUNIST. MOREOVER, IT SHOULD NOT BE FORGOTTEN THAT 18 YEARS AGO, A THEN-JUNIOR MINISTER IN A MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN PAKISTAN - ONE ZULFIKAR ALI BHUTTO -- ACCOMPLISHED A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL MISSION TO MOSCOW, SECURING SOVIET CREDITS FOR

PAKISTAN AND REMINDING THE WESTERN POWERS AT THAT TIME THAT PAKISTAN COULD TAKE AT LEAST A PART OF ITS BUSINESS ELSEWHERE.

12. THE GOP'S APPROACH WILL HAVE ALSO AT ITS NEXUS THE QUESTION OF INDIA -- NEVER VERY FAR FROM PAKISTAN CALCULATIONS ABOUT ITS FEARS AND ITS FUTURE. GOP PRIVATE WARNINGS TO US OF THE RENEWED RUSSIAN THREAT MAY BE DESIGNED NOT ONLY TO GAIN OUR ATTENTION TO PAKISTAN'S NEEDS BUT ALSO TO ENSURE THAT THE US, IN REASSESSING THE NEW SOUTH ASIAN BALANCE, WILL NOT LOOK TO INDIA TO LEAD A REGIONAL RESPONSE TO A PRO-SOVIET AFGHAN REGIME -- THEREBY PROMOTING INDIAN HEGEMONY IN SOUTH ASIA.

13. OF EVEN GREATER CONCERN, IN TERMS OF IMPACT ON PAKISTAN'S FOREIGN POLICY ORIENTATION, IS THE QUESTION OF HOW AN ELECTED GOVERNMENT -- WHENEVER IT COMES TO POWER IN THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO -- WILL HANDLE THE SOVIET PRESSURES. WEAK AND FECKLESS AS IT IS IN MANY IMPORTANT AREAS, THE PRESENT MILITARY GOVERNMENT IS MORE EASILY CAPABLE OF STANDING UP TO THE PRESSURES TO ACCOMMODATE THAN ANY POLITICAL GOVERNMENT IN THIS COUNTRY IS LIKELY TO BE, ESPECIALLY IF THE FLIRTATION BEGINS IN
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EARNEST DURING THE PERIOD OF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION.

14. PAKISTAN'S EXERCISE OF ITS SOVIET OPTION, WHATEVER IT MAY TAKE, POSES A VARIETY OF PROBLEMS FOR US POLICY. THE DAYS HAVE LONG GONE WHEN THE KEY TO AMERICAN ARSENALS OR TO SMOOTHING OVER BILATERAL DIFFERENCES WAS A FEARFUL PORTRAYAL OF THE COMMUNIST THREAT TO ONE OR ANOTHER PART OF THE WORLD. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD BE STAMPEDED BY THE GOP'S PORTRAYAL OF RUSSIANS AT THE KHYBER INTO ACTIONS SUPPORTIVE OF PAKISTAN THAT WOULD HAVE A COUNTERPRODUCTIVE EFFECT ON OUR RELATIONS WITH THE NEW AFGHAN REGIME OR WITH INDIA, OR ON THE PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL HARMONY.

15. WE DO HAVE INTERESTS HERE IN PAKISTAN, HOWEVER, WHICH REQUIRE THAT WE GIVE THE PAKISTANIS A FAIR HEARING, THAT WE ACCEPT THAT HOWEVER MUCH THEY MAY BE EXPLOITING THEIR PRESENT SITUATION VIS-A-VIS THE SOVIET UNION AND AFGHANISTAN AND INDIA, THEY ARE DOING SO BECAUSE OF LEGITIMATE FEARS AND ANXIETIES WHICH REQUIRE, ON THE PART OF FRIENDS, SYMPATHETIC ATTENTION AND A SEARCH FOR APPROPRIATE MEANS OF SUPPORT. IF THE REPROCESSING ISSUE CONTINUES TO TIE OUR HANDS, THEN THE GOP WILL NATURALLY LOOK TO DIVERSIFY ITS BASES OF INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT -- OR AT LEAST SEEK TO CUT ITS POTENTIAL LOSSES. THIS CAN LEAD TO SOME WARMING IN SOVIET-PAKISTANI RELATIONS.

16. OUR CHALLENGE WILL BE TO PREVENT PAKISTAN'S EXERCISE OF SOME PORTION OF ITS SOVIET OPTION FROM BECOMING MORE THAN A FLIRTATION WHICH WOULD OVER TIME LEAD TO SUCH AN EROSION OF ITS TIES WITH THE WEST THAT PAKISTAN WOULD BECOME SUSCEPTIBLE TO SOVIET PRESSURES ON

AREA ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO US, SUCH AS USN SHIP VISITS IN KARACHI,
CENTO AND OTHER MILITARY EXERCISE AND TRAINING ACTIVITIES, ETC. OR
POLICIES, STATEMENTS, AND ACTIONS MUST PERSUADE PAKISTAN THAT ITS
REAL INTERESTS CONTINUE TO LIE WITH THE WEST, DESPITE THE UNDERSTANDABLE
TEMPTATION AND SHORT-TERM ADVANTAGES OF FLIRTING WITH THE EAST. BUT IN
ORDER TO MAKE THIS POINT PERSUASIVELY, WE MUST HAVE A VIABLE 'WESTERN
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OPTION' FOR PAKISTAN TO CONSIDER SERIOUSLY,
THE NUCLEAR REPROCESSING ISSUE NOTWITHSTANDING. HUMMEL

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